

appeared at the end of March. A Great-blue Heron was seen most of the winter at Schenectady (Hallenbeck). Two Green-winged Teal were recorded Troy on the Christmas count (Andrews-Bartlett). Other good waterfowl records in December included Old Squaw and Greater Scaup. March waterfowl migration was near normal, with flocks of Mallards, Blacks, Pintails, American Goldeneyes and American Mergansers. Shovellers, Baldpates, Redheads, Canvasbacks, Buffleheads, Red-breasted and Hooded Mergansers were recorded in small numbers.

HAWKS — OWLS: Sparrow Hawks wintered in some numbers. Wintering Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks were seen by Esly Hallenbeck. A Goshawk was reported from Schaghticoke on March 15 (A. C. Newman). One Killdeer wintered at Collins Lake, Scotia. Great Black-backed Gulls, unusual here, were reported several times in February, while one Iceland Gull was seen at Schenectady on March 2 (Hallenbeck). A Short-eared Owl was seen near Rensselaer on Feb. 7 (N. Harrington).

SWIFTS — SHRIKES: Kingfishers arrived at the end of March. Woodpecker numbers were normal, with reports of Pileated from four counties. First reports of Phoebe were March 29. Horned Larks were seen in small flocks, largest group numbering about 50. Tree Swallows were first seen on March 28. A Tufted Titmouse at feeder of B. D. Miller in Schenectady was found dead on Dec. 26. Several records of wintering Robins and Bluebirds reflects the mildness of early winter. Cedar Waxwings, on the other hand, scarce. At least a half dozen Gray Shrikes were seen, more than usual.

BLACKBIRDS — SPARROWS: Wintering Meadowlarks were seen near Greenville on January 18 (G. Zimmer). A few Red-wings wintered, but great flocks began to appear about Feb. 25. An immature male Baltimore Oriole spent the winter at the feeder of Mrs. Charles Grace at Slingerlands. On March 29 he uttered his first song. Grackles appeared on Feb. 19 and have straggled through since then. There are two February records of Cowbirds, possibly wintering birds. Most observers first saw them after March 20. A Rusty Blackbird was seen at Amsterdam on March 30 (Fitzgerald).

A Cardinal was seen in Amsterdam in late March. Evening Grosbeaks were late for the most part, but by late February and March flocks of 15 to 40 appeared in several places. Purple Finches were the most abundant winter species, with flocks up to 300 reported. Four Pine Grosbeaks were seen near Voorheesville on April 1 (G. Zimmer). Redpolls were completely lacking. Pine Siskins and Goldfinches were seen in small numbers. A Savannah Sparrow was seen at Gallupville on March 30 (G. Zimmer). Fox Sparrows appeared on March 7 and are still with us. Tree Sparrows have been abundant. Song Sparrows wintered in small numbers, and appeared as migrants about the first week in March. Small flocks of Snow Buntings were reported throughout the winter, but never in groups of more than 40.

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REGION 9 — HUDSON - DELAWARE

Region Nine contains segments of two major river valleys, the Delaware on the west and the Hudson toward the east. In this region are six counties—Sullivan, Ulster, Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland — and the northerly two-thirds of Westchester.

Topographically and ecologically, the region is richly varied. From the region of Slide Mountain (4,204 feet) near the Greene County border, the land cascades downward toward the south, where the corner of Rockland County touches the northern end of the 450-foot Palisades of the Hudson. Between the Catskills and the Palisades are two major mountain ranges lying roughly on a southwest-northeast line: the prominent ridge of the Shawangunk Range (average elevation 1,600 feet) and the tumbled hills of the Hudson Highlands and the Ramapos (up to 1,300 feet at Bear Mountain) on the Orange-Rockland line and extending into Putnam and northern Westchester. Lowest elevations are the marshes of the Hudson River, only a few feet above sea level.

Measured by ruggedness of terrain, Ulster County is outstanding, but Sullivan has 3,080-foot Mongaup Mountain in the westward extension of the

Catskill foothills, and Dutchess and Putnam are walled on the east by the satellites of the Taconic Range. Northern Westchester is also hilly.

In contrast, most of Orange, Rockland and Westchester Counties is rolling, fairly low plateau with a sharp rise from the Hudson River. Westchester is heavily suburbanized, and Rockland is developing rapidly along similar lines. However, the entire region is endowed with state parks and forest preserves that tend to protect the wildlife community. Notable among these are the Catskill State Park, the Palisades Interstate Park, the Pound Ridge Reservation and other Westchester County parks. For better or for worse, the region is also the fountainhead for New York City's drinking water. Major inland bodies of water in Ulster (Ashokan and Rondout Reservoirs), Sullivan, Putnam and Westchester (Croton, Cross River, Kensico) are artificial pools for the New York water supply, and Sullivan County's Mongaup Valley also has power dams.

Most of the region was lumbered in the 18th and 19th Centuries, so second-growth trees predominate. Climax growth is hard to find in Westchester, Rockland, Orange. In the higher portions, the mixture of oak-hickory or maple-hemlock will give way to balsam and spruce, as on the laurel-covered slopes of the Catskills. Ulster County contains several cold highland bogs with Canadian Zone vegetation: Clintondale, Minnewaska, Leibhardt and other bogs less thoroughly studied.

The Catskills are a particularly interesting laboratory for relating life zones to altitude. From the tip of Slide Mountain down into the deeper valleys, for example, one may at different levels enjoy every thrush song known to the East. The Catskill peaks above 3,800 feet harbor such nesting species as Bicknell's Grey-cheeked Thrush, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Slate-colored Junco, White-throated Sparrow. And a little lower are Olive-backed Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Magnolia Warbler, Mourning Warbler.

As far south as the western portion of the Hudson Highlands, at elevations above 1,200 feet, breeding birds include Purple Finch, Brown Creeper, Blackburnian Warbler. At the same time, such southern species as the Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse, and Carolina Wren have extended their range up to Ulster County.

Except for Dutchess and Orange Counties, the region is well covered by active bird clubs. As far as your editor knows from the excellent co-operation he has received in assembling these notes, these clubs are: the John Burroughs Natural History Society, in the Ulster area; the Sullivan County Audubon Society; the Rockland Audubon Society; the Bedford Audubon Society, in northern Westchester; the Scarsdale Audubon Society and the Saw Mill River Audubon Society, in southern and central Westchester; the Linnaean Society of New York, which often covers points within the region. In addition, the staff of the Trailside Museum at Bear Mountain keeps a professional eye on both sides of the Rockland-Orange border. However, we are still sadly lacking in reports from the Newburgh area in Orange County and the Poughkeepsie area in Dutchess County.

The winter of 1953-54 can be summed up in one word: January. In the Hudson valley, January was snowier than normal and colder than normal, while December, February and March were far less wintry than usual; inland, March brought a return of snow, sleet, high winds and low temperatures.

LOONS — DUCKS: Pied-billed Grebes wintered in unusual numbers, with a high count of 22 by the Bedford Audubon Society in its own annual Christmas count for northern Westchester, Jan. 9. Three Pied-bills appeared for the first time on

the Trailside Museum's census of the Palisades Interstate Park, Jan. 2. Stanley O. Grierson found a Pied-bill on Jan. 18 lying dead on Route 17 in Katonah, Westchester County; the bird had evidently mistaken the highway for a pond surrounded by snow, and it had been hit by a car. The temperature that morning was 15 below zero.

Ducks seemed ready to winter in abnormal numbers until the January cold waves iced the Hudson River and other bodies of water. On Dec. 26, for example, the Rockland Audubon Society census showed more than 500 Canvasbacks at Stony Point, where half that number regularly winter. This flock was driven out by the freeze-up, as was the usual flock of 200 or so Ruddy Ducks in the Tappan Zee, off Piedmont. However, the Bedford Audubon census on Jan. 9 listed good numbers: 12 Pintails, 138 Ring-necked Ducks, 59 Hooded Mergansers.

Six Hooded Mergansers, three of each sex, were seen Dec. 4 at Carmel, Putnam Co., by Mrs. George Little. A White-winged Scoter, uncommon inland, visited Congers Lake, Rockland Co., on Dec. 16 (Dr. Marjorie R. Hopper, Eugene R. Brown). Four Buffle-heads on Lake Tiorati, Bear Mt.-Harriman Park, on Jan. 2 were noteworthy (Trailside Museum census). These ducks are rarely seen on the Hudson, let alone on a lake at 1,200-foot elevation. They are more regular on the larger reservoirs of Westchester, as shown by the 17 seen on Mar. 13 at Mt. Kisco by John Kelly and family and Mr. and Mrs. Stanley O. Grierson. The same observers found an early male Pintail on Mar. 14 at North Kensico Reservoir, Armonk. The Kellys spotted four Red-breasted Mergansers on the Hudson at Croton Point on Feb. 14.

HAWKS — OWLS: Turkey Vulture arrived in Rockland County rather early, Mar. 2 (MRH, Ruth Steffens). A Rough-legged Hawk loitered around Stone Ridge, Ulster Co., in late December and early January (Fred Hough).

Virginia Rail was a winter resident this year: Dec. 28 at Katonah, Westchester (SG); Jan. 9 (Leonard Sargent) and Jan. 16 (Paul De Laura) south of Mt. Kisco, Westchester; also at Iona Island, near Bear Mt., in January (Trailside Museum). A flock of eight Wilson Snipe appeared in New York City, Rockland Co., on Mar. 14 (Mr. and Mrs. Frank Steffens). Also a Pectoral Sandpiper in the same wet field on Mar. 27 (Betty Barron, Helen Tietz, Ruth Steffens). This was the third occurrence in Rockland County.

The Coot was a common wintering species this season. On Dec. 9, there were 30 at Titicus Reservoir, North Salem (SG), and on Jan. 9, there were 53 at Lake Glenida, Carmel, Putnam Co. (Mrs. Little) and 77 in the northern Westchester area covered by the Bedford Audubon census.

Our reports list an unusual variety of gulls and owls. Up to four Glaucous Gulls came to the dump at Croton Point: one on Jan. 31 (Rockland Audubon field trip), one on Feb. 7 (Geoffrey Carleton), and four on Feb. 7 (Mrs. Howard Apfel). Mrs. Apfel reported one adult and three immatures, also an immature Iceland Gull on the same date. A few Snowy Owl reports have been received: at Kingston Pt., Ulster Co., Dec. 23 (Mr. and Mrs. Henry Dunbar); at Welch Lake, Rockland Co., Jan. 2 (FS and party) and Jan. 3 (BB); at Bedford, Westchester Co., Jan. 22 (Dr. Alvin Underkoffler) and Feb. 9 (Leilah Diekman). A Long-eared Owl was seen several times in December near Kripplebush, Ulster Co. (FH). Near New Paltz, Dr. Robert Pyle saw a Barn Owl on Dec. 27.

Mrs. William Grierson, field secretary of Bedford Audubon Society, reports two unusual episodes involving owls and BAS members. On Feb. 3, after a trip to New York City and back, William Breuninger of Pound Ridge found the body of a Saw-whet Owl in the radiator grill of his car. At 8:30 p. m. on Feb. 21, Henry Lanier, Jr., and family and Stockton Greene came upon a Great Horned Owl while driving on Mead Chapple Road, South Salem. As the owl rose from the middle of the road, it dropped a freshly-killed Barn Owl. The latter is now in Stanley Grierson's collection.

SWIFTS — SHRIKES: Two reports emphasize the success of the Pileated Woodpecker's comeback in this region: on Dec. 6, one of these birds was seen within the village of Pleasantville (Mrs. H. Townsend Laire), and on Jan. 2 the Bear Mountain census listed a record high of eight birds. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was at Croton Point on Feb. 14 (GC).

An Arkansas Kingbird stayed at the Bear Mountain Trailside Museum from Dec. 6 (John C. Orth) to Dec. 26 (John Kenney). Phoebe's wintered in above average numbers.

A pair of Horned Larks on Sackett Lake Road, Sullivan Co., on Jan. 10 allowed Mr. and Mrs. Wilber P. Carr to approach closely, and showed some slight interest in their Audubon bird call. A pair of Prairie Horned Larks was seen at Lederle Laboratories, Pearl River, Rockland Co., on Feb. 18 by Frank Steffens, who found them carrying food, apparently to nestlings, on Apr. 2. These birds nested in the same place in 1949, 1950, 1953 and perhaps others years.

Swallows late and swallows early: A Barn Swallow was found dying on the late date of Dec. 1 outside of Purdys School. The finder, Bonnie Lee Sprout, turned the bird over to Stanley Grierson for identification and preservation. A Tree Swallow flew over Piermont Pier, Rockland Co., on the amazingly early date of Feb. 20 (RAS field trip).

Records for the Tufted Titmouse and Carolina Wren are now too numerous to list for Westchester, Putnam, Sullivan and Ulster Counties, where they did not occur until recent years. Eleven were counted on the Bedford Audubon census Jan. 9. The only Red-breasted Nuthatch reported in the region remained at Lake Kitchawan from Jan. 29 through March (Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Weeks of the BAS). Brown Creepers were abundant at the turn of the year, with high counts of 13 by the Bear Mountain Trailside Museum on Jan. 2 and an equal number by BAS on its Jan. 9 census.

Two Catbirds turned up near Chappaqua, Westchester Co., on Mar. 1 (Mrs. Joseph Batten), and Brown Thrasher at Nyack on Mar. 6 (MRH). A wintering Brown Thrasher was seen on Jan. 17 in Nyack (EBR). A Mockingbird came daily to the feeding tray of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Steffens in New York City, Rockland Co., from Jan. 4 through March. Wilber P. Carr reports Robins more numerous than usual for winter in Sullivan County.

Pipits were decidedly uncommon, though Dr. Pyle saw a block of about 50 near Springtown, Ulster Co., on Feb. 5. There were two reports of Shrikes: Dec. 11 at the feeding station of Kenneth D. Niven, Monticello, Sullivan Co., and Dec. 27 near New Paltz (Dr. Pyle).

A Bohemian Waxwing, extremely rare in the East, is carefully described by Sullivan County Audubon Society. It was in company of a Cedar Waxwing at Niven's feeding station from Jan. 3 to Jan. 5, with frequent opportunities for side-by-side comparison. The bird was studied through 9x35 binoculars and 20x Bausch & Lomb telescope by Mr. and Mrs. Niven and Mr. and Mrs. Edward McBride, who noted larger size, pearly-grey underparts, white wing markings, and rusty under tail coverts. They also heard the bird call.

BLACKBIRDS — SPARROWS: Rusty Blackbird wintered in Rockland County Feb. 22, MRH, RS), Sullivan County (KDN), and Westchester County (12 on Feb. 22 at Mt. Kisco, Mr. and Mrs. R. S. Wodson, Jr.). The Cardinal is well established in Ulster County (FH).

The big find in Westchester this winter was a Black-headed Grosbeak, a western species. Stanley Grierson had the experience of seeing his first Black-headed Grosbeak in New Canaan, Conn., on Feb. 21 and his second less than a week later, Feb. 26, in his home town of Katonah, 20 miles away. The Katonah bird came to the feeding station of Mr. and Mrs. William Grierson. It was identified as a young male, with a head slightly darker than that of the New Canaan bird. Though it came to the feeding station at irregular hours from 12 noon to 4 p. m., the bird was seen by a dozen local people through March. As a further oddity, a Dickcissel was often at the feeding tray at the same time.

Evening Grosbeaks entered the region in small numbers: ten at Monticello on Dec. 6 (KDN), five at Mt. Kisco on Jan. 23 (Mr. and Mrs. John Trainer), three at Chappaqua on Feb. 3 (Mrs. Jarvis Matsumoto), and three at Katonah on Feb. 16 (Mrs. E. D. Appleby). William Russell reported a high count of 86 Purple Finches on Mar. 22 near Mt. Kisco, Westchester Co., but this species was sparse during the winter. House Finches continue to appear regularly in more and more localities, apparently as the spread from the western Long Island colony develops further. Two came to the Niven's feeder in Monticello, Sullivan Co., on Dec. 6; three were identified among a flock of Purple Finches at Pound Ridge Reservation, Westchester Co., during the Bedford Audubon census Jan. 9 (William Wheeler); one was seen in Peekskill on Feb. 8 (Mrs. Eric Rusch).

Redpolls were very scarce: Three seen in Monticello (KDN) on Jan. 18 remained for the rest of the winter, and a small flock was noted in Katonah on Jan. 29 by Mrs. Albert Melahn. There were no other reports. Pine Siskins occurred only one or two at a time in normally favored portions of Rockland, Westchester, Putnam

and Ulster Counties, yet Sullivan County had a flock of more than 400 in Monticello on Dec. 26 (Pauline Chernick and Edward McBride) and a flock of more than 100 from Nov. 16 through the winter at Ferndale (WPC).

Beside the Katonah Dickcissel, the Dickcissel remained at the feeding station of Dr. Marjorie R. Hopper in Nyack from Jan. 20 through Feb. 15, and was reported at Stone Ridge, Ulster Co., in late December (Tom Morgan, fide Fred Hough). Two Towhees were counted on the Bear Mountain Trailside Museum census Jan. 2. A Savannah Sparrow was reported near New Paltz on Dec. 27 (RP) and an early Fox Sparrow at Katonah on Mar. 4 (Mrs. William Grierson).

Snow Buntings, normally irregular, were distributed about as usual, except that they were scarce in Ulster County (FH). Robert J. Hammerslag reports that the Bedford Audubon census on Jan. 9 yielded 26 Buntings at the Amawalk Reservation (John Kelly and family). On Jan. 15, Wilber P. Carr saw more than 25 at Ferndale, Sullivan Co. A big count of about 50 on Jan. 17 at Vista, Lewisboro Township, northeastern Westchester, was reported by Mrs. Walter S. Poor. The only Rockland County records came from Lederle Laboratories, Pearl River: Jan. 19 (FS), Jan. 21, three birds (MRH, ERB).

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REGION 10 — MARINE

This marine region consists of New York City's five boroughs — Kings, Queens, Manhattan, Bronx and Richmond — part of Westchester and the eastern counties of Long Island — Nassau and Suffolk. Long Island, approximately 125 miles long, occupying the bulk of the territory, comprises a hilly north shore which extends into a central "backbone" of glacial moraines, ending in terminal moraines which slope to an almost flat, sandy plain reaching south for variable distances. This ranges from the Hempstead plains on the west (the widest distance) to a mile or less on the south fork near East Hampton. Margin lands occupy the lower part of the plain; then come the marsh lands, bordering the many bays which are contained by the outer barrier beaches and fed through inlets. The outer beach extends along the Atlantic ocean from the Rockaways to Shinnecock. Further east, dune-lands on the main island go to the high bluffs at Montauk, whose steep sides undergo considerable erosion during major storms. Similar bluffs range along the north shore on the Long Island sound westward to Port Jefferson, where sheltered bays are to be found intermittently westward to the Little Neck Bay area in Queens county. Along the sound, the shore-line is mostly rocky or pebbly, the fine white sand being restricted mostly to the vicinity of Eaton's Neck, Sunken Meadow and a few other locations. Between the sound and the ocean, east of Riverhead, the island is divided into two flukes or forks. Between these are the broad Peconic Bay and Gardiners Bay. Islands of importance in the region are Shelter, Gardiners, Cartwright, Plum and Fishers. There are fairly large tracts of salt march in the sheltered bays between the forks.

Numerous small streams flow in shallow, sandy beds southward on the coastal plain, but the largest — the Peconic River — flows east into Peconic Bay. Streams are insignificant on the north shore. Small artificial ponds and reservoirs add diversity to the flat plains, which around Hempstead are completely inhabited, and almost fully populated to Bayshore on the south shore. The hilly north shore offers more difficulty to builders and it is here that the best breeding populations among birds are found. Elevations range from sea level to 420 feet in the center part of the island on High Hill, the highest of the Manetto or West Hills. There are a few other prominent hills ranging from the 391-foot Harbor Hill at Roslyn to Bald Hill, north of Speonk.